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Senate

IN RECOGNITION OF LTC JOHN BURKE'S RETIREMENT

Mr. CARPER. Mr. President, I rise today in recognition of LTC John Burke upon his retirement from the U.S. Air Force. John is the longest certified C-5 pilot in the history of the U.S. Air Force, and has served his country with distinction for 32 years.

Since 1995, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served as Chief Pilot for the 709th Airlift Squadron at Dover Air Force Base. Assigned to overseas mission support, joint service exercises, humanitarian relief, Presidential movement and aircrew training, he has been indispensable to his squadron's success.

In his latest position, Lieutenant Colonel Burke was responsible for evaluating procedures and techniques that ensured the safety and efficacy of the C-5 in its strategic airlift missions, as well as evaluating its pilots.

As you may know, the C-5 is the Air Force's largest cargo aircraft, capable of quickly moving large numbers of men, women and materiel to troubled areas around the world.

The C-5 will ensure our military readiness for generations to come, as will Lieutenant Colonel Burke's legacy of leadership and heroism.

Lieutenant Colonel Burke is a well-rounded, seasoned officer with a record for consistently combining effective leadership and professionalism. He leads by example--motivating people, making key decisions, producing results and maintaining high

morale. He has amassed an impressive 7,400 flight hours and frequent accolades.

Throughout his distinguished career, Lieutenant Colonel Burke flew in vital missions and earned numerous decorations. In a career that spans three decades, Lieutenant Colonel Burke has served in significant military campaigns, such as Nickel Grass, Desert Shield and Desert Storm, Operation Enduring Freedom, and Operation Just Cause.

On May 30, 1972, barraged by antiaircraft fire flying over Southeast Asia, Burke landed in Song Be to deliver much needed fuel and ammunition to allied troops fighting hostile forces, earning the Distinguished Flying Cross. Additionally, he has garnered numerous other medals and commendations, including the Meritorious Service Medal, the Aerial Achievement Medal, the Humanitarian Service Medal, the Air Force Longevity Service Award Ribbon, and Republic of Vietnam Gallantry Cross.

Military service runs in the New York native's blood. Lieutenant Colonel Burke's father was a World War II Army Air Force navigator and bombardier, and his mother was an Army nurse. Joining the U.S. Air Force in 1970, Lieutenant Colonel Burke carried on the family tradition of military allegiance.

LTC John Burke marked his career with consistent, exemplary leadership in service to his Nation, earning a reputation for loyalty, dedication, integrity, and honesty.

Upon his retirement he leaves a legacy of commitment to freedom that generations will follow. I commend him for his remarkable service and wish him the best in his future endeavors. He is a patriot in every sense of the word.